

The *Madhab* of the People of Ḥadīth

By the Muḥaddith, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mubārakfurī

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Know that the scholars of the *Hanafī* school of jurisprudence maintain that Imām al-Tirmidhī – may Allah’s Mercy be upon him – was of the *Shāfi’ī* school, and some of them say that he was *Hanbalī*; and this is a statement that their mouths have put forth, and falsehood that which they claim! For the truth of the matter is that he was neither *Shāfi’ī* nor *Hanbalī*, just as he was neither *Mālikī*, nor *Hanafī*. Instead, he was from the People of Ḥadīth; adhering to the *Sunnah*, working by it. He was a *Mujtahid*,² not a blind follower of any one from the people. And this is apparent to any one who has read his *Jāmi’* and has examined it and reflected upon it. And what is astonishing is how they maintain that he was *Shāfi’ī* or *Hanbalī*. Did they not know that if he was *Shāfi’ī*, blindly following Imām al-Shāfi’ī, he would have given precedence to the *madhab* of his Imām, al-Shāfi’ī, in all of the issues where there is difference of opinion, or most of them, over the other schools of jurisprudence; and he would have supported it and aided it as is the case with those who blindly follow. However, he did not do this; instead, he refuted the statements of al-Shāfi’ī in many places in his book. Do you not see that in the chapter: “Delaying *Salah al-Dhuhr* in Extreme Heat,” he states after citing the narration of *al-Ibrād*: “...and a number of the people of knowledge have preferred to delay *Salah al-Dhuhr* in extreme heat, from them: Ibn al-Mubārak, Aḥmad and Ishāq.”

This, while al-Shāfi’ī has stated, “Certainly *al-Ibrād*³ for *Salah al-Dhuhr* is only if the people find it difficult [to go out in the heat] due to their distance from the maṣjid. As for the one who prays alone or prays in the maṣjid of his people, then that which I like for him is not to delay the *Salah* in the extreme heat.”

¹ The following is taken from *Tuhfah al-Aḥwadhī* (1/351)

² A scholar capable of making independent rulings based upon proofs and evidences.

³ Delaying the prayer from the time of extreme heat until when it has become cool. It is collected by al-Bukhārī (no. 532, 528, 621, 895, 3188), Muslim (no. 135) Abū Dawūd (no. 401), al-Tirmidhī (no. 157, 158) and Aḥmad (6/129, 202, 222). It is also related in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Ibn Khuzaymah (no. 330, 397, 1843), *Sunan al-Kubrā* (2/220), (4/422, 423), the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Ibn Hibbān (no. 1802) and in the *Muṣannaḥ* of Ibn Abū Shaybah (1/321).

As for those who have chosen to delay *Salah al-Dhuhr* in the extreme heat, then this is more appropriate, closer to the adherence to the *Sunnah*.⁴ As for the opinion of Imām al-Shāfiʿī, that permission to delay is specific to those at a distance from the masjid as a result of hardship, then indeed, what is found in the ḥadīth of Abū Dharr ؓ points to other than what he has stated. Abū Dharr ؓ said, “We were with the Prophet ﷺ on a journey, and Bilāl ؓ called the *Adhān* for *Salah al-Dhuhr*. The Prophet ﷺ said, “O Bilāl, when it is cool, when it is cool.”⁵ So if the matter was as Imām al-Shāfiʿī says, there would have been no reason for *al-Ibrād* at that time because they were all together on a journey, and there was no hardship upon them resulting from distance [to the masjid].

Do they not know that he (i.e. al-Tirmidhī) said in the chapter: The Person who Prays the Obligatory Prayer then goes to Lead the People Afterward: “This is the practice of our companions, al-Shāfiʿī, Aḥmad and Ishāq,” and he says in the chapter: The Man who Accepts Islām and has Ten Wives: “...this is the practice from the ḥadīth of Ghaylān⁶ ؓ with our companions, from them: al-Shāfiʿī, Aḥmad and Ishāq.”

He says in the chapter: What has come Regarding Prayer in the Dwellings of Sheep and the Resting Places of Camels:⁷ “And upon this is the practice of our companions and the saying of Aḥmad and Ishāq.” So these statements of al-Tirmidhī are a clear illustration that he was neither *Shāfiʿī* nor was he *Hanbalī*; therefore, the statement of those who claim this has clearly been negated. So if you ask what is intended by his statement “our companions?” I say, Imām Abū ‘Isā al-Tirmidhī was from the People of Ḥadīth, and his school of jurisprudence was that of the People of Ḥadīth, so the intention of his statement “our companions” is *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*. Al-Qārī said in *al-Mirqāt Sharḥ al-Mishkāt*, clarification of the statement of al-Tirmidhī, “...so

⁴ As is found in the ḥadīth collected by al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* (no. 501) on the authority of Abū Hurayrah ؓ who narrated that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “If the heat becomes severe, then wait till it is cooler before praying, for indeed the severe heat is from the exhaling of the Hellfire.”

⁵ Collected by al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* (no. 505).

⁶ Related by al-Tirmidhī (no. 1125). On the authority of Ibn ‘Umar that Ghaylān ibn Salamah al-Thaqafī ؓ accepted Islām and had ten wives in *al-Jāhiliyyah*, and they accepted Islām with him. So the Prophet ﷺ commanded him to choose four [of them].” It was also collected by Ibn Mājah (no. 2010), Aḥmad (2/79, 81, 131, 198), al-Muwattā (no. 1250), the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Ibn Hibbān (no. 4080, 4081, 4082), *Sunan al-Kubrā* of al-Bayhaqī (10/378, 442, 443, 444, 445, 447), al-Hākim in *al-Mustadrak* (2/209, 210) and al-Daraqutnī in his *Sunan* (no. 3617, 3618, 3619, 3620, 3628).

⁷ It is related by Imām al-Tirmidhī (no. 348, 349). On the authority of Abū Hurayrah ؓ who said that the Prophet ﷺ said, “Pray in the dwellings of sheep, but do not pray in the resting places of the camels.” Imām al-Tirmidhī said, “This ḥadīth is *Ḥasan Ṣaḥīḥ*.”

and so is considered weak amongst our companions, that is, the People of Ḥadīth.” I say this is the truth of the matter of which the aforementioned statements of al-Tirmidhī indicate.

One of the *Hanafiyyah* says in his commentary of *Jāmi’ al-Tirmidhī*, “As for the school of the authors of *al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, it is said that al-Bukhārī was *Shāfi’ī*, but the truth of the matter is that al-Bukhārī was *Mujtahid*. As for Muslim, I am not certain about his *madhab*.⁸ Concerning Ibn Mājah, perhaps he was *Shāfi’ī*, and al-Tirmidhī was *Shāfi’ī*. As for Abū Dawud and al-Nisā’ī, what is commonly understood is that they, too, were *Shāfi’ī*. However, the truth of the matter

⁸ al-Muḥaddith Muḥammad ibn Ādam says of this in his explanation of *Muqaddimah Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*:

“Know that Imām Muslim was a scholar of jurisprudence, working by the texts. So the of the blind-followers imagine that he was upon the school of thought of so and so because they see him in agreement with the opinion of that Imām in certain issues, either due to concurrence in the evidences, or because he took [directly] from him or from someone else who took from the Imām. If this makes a person a blind-follower, then we say: ‘Indeed Imām al-Shāfi’ī was *Mālikī*, since he took knowledge from him; and Imām Aḥmad was *Shāfi’ī*, because he took from him and so on. But these allegers never make this claim; rather, they free themselves from it.

And what disproves all of this is his contradiction of that Imām in other matters, and it is well known that the blind follower does not differ with his Imām whatsoever.

The truth of the matter is that he is upon the school of the People of Ḥadīth, not a blind follower of anyone. Rather, he is like al-Shāfi’ī, Aḥmad and other scholars of *Fiqh* from the people Ḥadīth. Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Hākim said it best when he mentioned him from the scholars of *Fiqh* from the people of Ḥadīth, and devoted a biography to him, as he did the other Imāms like al-Zuhrī, al-Awzā’ī, Ibn ‘Uyanah, Ibn al-Mubārak, Yaḥya al-Qaṭṭān, Ibn Mahdī, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn al-Madīnī, etc. And mentioned before their biographies that what was intended was the *Fiqh* of Ḥadīth.”

Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Ādam concludes: “In short, Imām Muslim, and the other authors of the six books [of ḥadīth], are scholars of *Fiqh* from the people of Ḥadīth, callers to it. They did not deem it permissible to blind follow anyone, no matter his status; and they had no Imām save the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ of whom Allāh ﷻ placed the creation’s guidance and success in obedience to him ﷺ and following his example.

Allah ﷻ says:

“If you obey him, you will be upon right guidance.” [*al-Nur*: 54]

And His ﷻ statement:

“And follow him so that you may be guided.” [*al-A’raf*: 158]

And if their statements agree with the statements of some of the Imāms in certain matters, then some of the heedless consider this to be blind following and then brand them with what is not befitting one who is much less than them in stature. And refuge is sought with Allāh from those who oppose what is correct, and Allāh ﷻ knows best what is right, and unto Him is the return [of all].” See *Qurrah ‘Ayn al-Muhtaj* (1/12-14)

is that they were *Ḥanbalī*. For indeed the books of *Ḥanbalī Fiqh* are filled with the narrations of Abū Dawud on Imām Aḥmad.”

I say (i.e. al-Mubārakfūrī), just as al-Bukhārī – may Allāh have mercy upon him – was a follower of the *Sunnah*, adhering to it, a *Mujtahid*, not a blind follower of any of the four Imāms or other than them, such was the case with Muslim and Abū Dawud and al-Nisā’ī and Ibn Mājah. All of them were followers of the *Sunnah*, working by it, not blind followers of anyone from the people. As for the conclusion that Abū Dawud and al-Nisā’ī were *Ḥanbalī*, due to the fact that the books of *Ḥanbalī Fiqh* are filled with the narrations of Abū Dawud on Aḥmad, then this is baseless! Even if the books of *Ḥanbalī Fiqh* were filled with the narrations of Abū Dawud, this does not necessitate that he was *Ḥanbalī*, do you not see that the books of *Ḥanafī Fiqh* are filled with narrations of Imām Abū Yūsuf and Imām Muḥammad, and with that, they were not considered *Ḥanafī*, blind followers of Abū Hanīfah.

Know that this individual who has claimed that Abū Dawud and al-Nisā’ī were absolute blind followers of Imām Aḥmad, without restriction, abandoned this statement after taking heed. He says elsewhere in his commentary of *Jāmi’ al-Tirmidhī*, “Yaḥyā ibn Ma’īn was of the *Ḥanafī madhab*, as found in *al-Tārīkh* of Ibn al-Khalkān, except the *taqlīd* of the *Salaf* was the *taqlīd* of *al-Ijtihādāt*, where there was nothing established from the *marfū’*⁹ or *mawqūf*,¹⁰ not like our *taqlīd*, and this is my belief.”

I say there is no established proof that Imām Abū Dawud or al-Nisā’ī were blind followers of Imām Aḥmad in *Ijtihādāt*, and indeed, this is only their conjecture, and certainly conjecture is no substitute for the truth! Concerning his statement, “As for Ibn Mājah, *perhaps* he was *Shāfi’ī*,” indicates that they have no proof to substantiate that Ibn Mājah was *Shāfi’ī*. One of the *Hanafiyyah* says in the introduction to the explanation of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*:

Some of those skilled in knowledge of the narrations say, ‘As for al-Bukhārī and Abū Dawud, they were Imāms in *Fiqh*, from the people of *Ijtihād*. As for Muslim, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nisā’ī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Khuzaymah, Abū Ya’lā, al-Bazzār and their likes, they are from the school of the People of Ḥadīth, not blindly following anyone, nor were they absolutely from the people of *Ijtihād*. Rather, they leaned towards the statement of the Imāms of Ḥadīth, like al-Shāfi’ī

⁹ The ḥadīth which is directly ascribed to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ by the narrator

¹⁰ The narration which is ascribed directly to one of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ.

and Aḥmad and Ishaaq and Abū 'Ubayd and their likes. And they are closer to the *madhab* of the people of *al-Hijāz* than the *madhab* of the people of *al-'Irāq*.

As for Abū Dawud at-Tiyālīsī, he preceded all of them, being from the generation of Yahyā ibn Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān and Yazīd ibn Hārūn al-Wāsiṭī and 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī and their likes from the generation of the teachers of Imām Aḥmad. And all of them went to the greatest efforts in the following the *Sunnah*. Although, there were present from them those who leaned toward the *madhab* of the people of *al-'Irāq* like Wakī' and Yahyā ibn Sa'īd, and from them those who leaned toward the *madhab* of the people of al-Madīnah, like 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī. As for al-Dāraquṭnī, he leaned towards the *madhab* of al-Shāfi'ī, though he was a person of *Ijtihād*, and he was from the Imāms of Ḥadīth and *Sunnah*. His situation was not like some of those who came after him from the Scholars of Ḥadīth, adhering to *taqlīd* (blind-following) in general, except in a few instances of which can be counted. And certainly al-Dāraquṭnī was stronger in *Ijtihād*, more knowledgeable.

He also said, "And what is apparent is that Abū Dawud was closer to being *Ḥanbalī*, for certainly the books of *Ḥanbalī fiqh* are filled with his narrations upon Aḥmad." This is his quote from *al-A'rf al-Shādhī*, and you have already learned its rebuttal. So were you to ask, if Imām al-Bukhārī was not *Shāfi'ī*, following Imām al-Shāfi'ī, then why did they consider him *Shāfi'ī*, and why is he mentioned in *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyah*? Al-'Allāmah Shāh Waliyyullāh al-Dihlawī states in his *Ḥujjatullāh al-Bālighah*, "Perhaps one of the People of Ḥadīth would be attributed to a particular school of jurisprudence due to agreement with it in many issues. Just as al-Nisā'ī and al-Bayhaqī were attributed to al-Shāfi'ī."

He also states in his work entitled *al-Inṣāf*:

What is meant by the ascription to the *Shāfi'ī madhab* is that he follows him in the principles of exploring evidences (*usūl*), and classifying them. And if he sometimes contradicts this, then this is not an issue, as he does not stray from this methodology except in certain instances; and it does not affect him being considered from the *Shāfi'ī madhab*. Similarly, al-Imām al-Bukhārī, for he is counted from the *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyah* by Shaykh Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī who said, "He gained knowledge from al-Ḥumaydī, and al-Ḥumaydī took knowledge from al-Shāfi'ī."

Also, in his book, *al-Fawā'id al-Darārī*, al-‘Allāmah, Shaykh Ismā‘īl al-‘Ijlūnī explains what has preceded regarding al-Bukhārī taking knowledge from al-Karabīsī, al-Za‘farānī and Abū Thawr, thus making him Shāfi‘ī, as well as the difference of opinion concerning his *madhab*. And it is said that he was *Shāfi‘ī* in his *madhhab*, as al-Subkī holds in his *Tabaqāt al-Shāfi‘iyyah*. He states, “Certainly, he heard from al-Karabīsī and Abū Thawr and al-Za‘farānī and gained knowledge from al-Ḥumaydī, all of them from the companions of al-Shāfi‘ī.”

It is also stated that he (i.e. al-Bukhārī) was *Ḥanbalī*. Abū al-Hasan ibn al- ‘Irāqī listed him among the companions of Imām Aḥmad. Then he cited the narration from al-Bukhārī where he said, “I entered Baghdād eight times, and every time I sat with Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. The last time I left him, he said to me, ‘O Abū ‘Abd Allāh will you leave the knowledge and people and travel to Khurasān?’” And al-Bukhārī said, “I now recall his statement.” And it is said he was a *Mujtahid*. This is the choice of al-Sakhāwī. He said, ‘And I lean toward the fact that he was *Mujtahid*.’ This was clearly stated by Taqiy al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyyah. He says, “Certainly he was an Imām in *Fiqh* due to his *Ijtihād*.”

